

1. A telephone network interface for facilitating communications through use of a telephone with an embedded device through a gateway and for facilitating communications between a remote service provider and the gateway, the telephone network interface comprising:

- 5 a telephone interface for electronic communication with a telephone;
- 10 a gateway interface for electronic communications with a gateway;
- 15 an external telephone network interface for connecting the telephone network interface to an external telephone network; and
- 20 connection control, the connection control operating to cause the telephone to be selectively in electronic communication with the external telephone network for telephone calls such that a user at the telephone is capable of dialing out and is capable of receiving an incoming telephone call, and the connection control operating to selectively cause the telephone to be in electronic communication with the gateway for communicating with an embedded device such that device requests from the telephone are communicated to the gateway, wherein the gateway is in electronic communication with the embedded device, and the connection control operating to selectively cause the gateway to be in electronic communication with the external telephone network to enable electronic communications between a control service provider and the gateway.
- 25 2. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 further comprising a plurality of telephone interfaces for electronic communications with a plurality of telephones.
- 30 3. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a telecommunications network.
- 4. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a global computer network.

5. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a computer network.

6. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 wherein the control service provider 5 includes schedule data to indicate when certain messages are to be sent to certain embedded devices.

7. The telephone network interface as defined in claim 1 wherein the control service provider includes device location data to indicate the address of certain embedded devices.

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8. A combined telephone network interface and gateway for facilitating communications through use of a telephone with an embedded device and for facilitating communications between a remote service provider and the embedded device, the combined telephone network interface and gateway comprising:

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a telephone interface for electronic communication with a telephone;
an external telephone network interface for connecting the telephone network interface to an external telephone network;
a gateway for electronic communications with the embedded device, the gateway being programmed to communicate with the embedded device, and the gateway also being programmed to enable communications with the embedded device from a control service provider;

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connection control, the connection control operating to cause the telephone to be selectively in electronic communication with the external telephone network for telephone calls such that a user at the telephone is capable of dialing out and is capable of receiving an incoming telephone call, and the connection control operating to selectively cause the telephone to be in electronic communication with the gateway for communicating with an embedded device such that device requests from the telephone are communicated to the gateway, wherein the gateway is in electronic communication with the embedded device, and the connection control operating to selectively cause the gateway to be in electronic communication with the external telephone network to

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enable electronic communications between a control service provider and the gateway.

9. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 8 further comprising a plurality of telephone interfaces for electronic communications with a plurality of telephones.
10. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 9 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a telecommunications network.
11. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 9 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a global computer network.
12. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 9 wherein the control service provider communicates with the telephone network interface through use of a computer network.
- 20 13. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 9 wherein the control service provider includes schedule data to indicate when certain messages are to be sent to certain embedded devices.
- 25 14. The combined telephone network interface and gateway as defined in claim 13 wherein the control service provider includes device location data to indicate the address of certain embedded devices.